

- 12 -

CLAIMS:

1. A corrugated or other suitable carton board tray for baking a food product in the tray that includes a
5 rectangular base, upright side walls, upright end walls, and a locking assembly that holds the side walls and the end walls in upright positions with the corners of the tray and therefore the corners of the baked food product produced in the tray being straight and squared.
10
2. The tray defined in claim 1 wherein each side wall of the tray is inwardly concave along its length between the end walls so that the side walls can flex outwardly to form side walls that are perpendicular to the
15 base and perpendicular to the end walls as the food product in the tray expands during baking.
3. The tray defined in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the locking assembly releasably holds together the end
20 walls and the side walls of the tray so that the end walls and the side walls can be folded outwardly and downwardly to provide access to the food product that has been baked in the tray.
- 25 4. The tray defined in claim 3 wherein the locking assembly includes locking tabs on the side walls and slots in the end walls that receive the locking tabs and releasably hold together the end walls and the side walls.
- 30 5. The tray defined in claim 4 wherein the side walls include flaps that are form part of the end walls of the tray.
- 6 The tray defined in claim 5 wherein the locking
35 tabs extend from the flaps.
7. The tray defined in any one of the preceding

- 13 -

claims includes gusset corners in a lower section of the tray.

8. The tray defined in claim 7 wherein the gusset corners extend no more than one third of the height of the tray.

9. A blank of a corrugated or any other suitable carton board material for forming the tray defined in any one of the preceding claims includes a series of panels separated by fold lines and the panels include (a) a base panel that is adapted to form the base of the tray, (b) side wall panels adjoining the base panel along opposite sides of the base panel that are adapted to form the upright side walls of the tray, (c) end wall panels adjoining the base panel at opposite ends of the base panel (hereinafter referred to as the "base flaps"), and (d) end wall panels adjoining the side wall panels at opposite ends of the side wall panels (hereinafter referred to as "side wall flaps"), wherein the base flaps and the side wall flaps are adapted to form the end walls of the tray, and wherein the base flaps and the side wall flaps include the locking assembly.

10. The blank defined in claim 9 wherein the side wall flaps include locking tabs and the base flaps include slots that can receive the locking tabs when the base and side wall flaps are in folded positions.

11. The blank defined in claim 9 or claim 10 wherein adjacent base flaps and side wall flaps are partly joined together by gusset panels that are adapted to form gusset corners in a lower section of the tray.

12. A method of forming the tray defined in any one of the preceding claims from the blank defined in any one of claims 9 to 11 includes the steps of (a) forming each

- 14 -

side wall by folding the side wall panels upwardly at the fold lines that separate the side wall panels and the base panels and (b) forming each end wall by (i) folding the base flap at that end upwardly at the fold line that separates the base flap and the base panel, and (ii) folding the side wall flaps at that end inwardly at the fold lines that separate the side wall flaps and the side wall panels to bring the side wall flaps into contact with the outer surface of the upstanding base flap, and (c) engaging the locking assembly to lock together the side wall flaps and the base flaps.

13. The method defined in claim 12 further includes engaging the locking assembly by inserting the locking tabs on the side wall flaps into the slots in the base flaps when the base and side wall flaps are in folded positions and thereby holding the side wall flaps against the base flaps.

14 A method of baking a food product in the tray defined in any one of claims 1 to 8 and thereafter at least partially packaging the baked food product includes the steps of (a) depositing a predetermined amount of unbaked food product mix in the tray, (b) baking the food product in the tray, and (c) packaging the baked food product located in the tray so that the baked food product can be transported to an end use location.

15. The method defined in claim 14 further includes cutting the baked food product into smaller portions in the tray.

16. The method defined in claim 15 includes cutting the baked food product into smaller portions of substantially uniform size and shape in the tray.